

AN EARNEST
INVITATION

TO THE

Friends of the established Church,

TO JOIN

With several of their Brethren, Clergy, and
Laity, in *London*, in setting apart one
Hour of every Week, for Prayer and
Supplication, during the present trouble-
some Times.

Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, I will
deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.
Psalm l. 15.



L O N D O N:

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698 2.18.
of
England
Church of

Reader,

BEFORE thou openest this little Book,
pray to God to accompany thy reading of
it with his grace and blessing: And if thou
receivest any profit from it, beg he would
make it profitable to others: And if he please
to render it the means of doing any good, give
all the glory to God the Father, through Jesus
Christ our Lord.





A N E A R N E S T
I N V I T A T I O N , &c.

My Christian Brother,



OD has declared, that when a land sins against him by trespassing grievously, then he will stretch out his hand upon it, and visit it with his four sore judgments, the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, and the pestilence. These he sends to punish the land for its grievous trespasses. He has visited us with three of these sore judgments, and therefore our land has trespassed grievously. And if we continue to provoke him, and refuse to receive correction, he will continue these punishments; and it is to be feared, if we remain hardened and impenitent under them, he will at last give us over to the destroyer.

The present circumstances of our public affairs are exceedingly awful and alarming. Our danger is confessedly great. Our enemies are many and mighty, and our numerous sins are in their interest. Every sin helps them to destroy us; and God has been thus far on our enemies side. He has been by them punishing our sins, and yet with a strange infatuation we sin on securely, as

if we did not apprehend, that continuance in sin would certainly cause the continuance of our calamities. And dreadful it is to see how ineffectual all the former judgments have been to reform us. Still our people refuse to deny themselves their diversions and their vices. And the season of the year is come, when without any reformation at home, we are going to send out our fleets and armies against our enemies abroad, vainly flattering ourselves with hopes of success, while our sins set God at defiance, and make him continue to fight against us with his almighty power.

If then our people will not be reclaimed by past judgments, and consequently greater must be expected, What is to be done? What can we do, but use our interest with God in prayer? We have no other expedient left. If our people wont plead with God for themselves, let us plead for them. Our encouragement is great; we have many sweet promises in scripture to rely upon. There is one in *Solomon's* prayer which suits our case exactly (2 *Chron.* vi. 24, 25.)
 “ And if thy people *Israel* be put to the worse
 “ before the enemy, because they have sinned
 “ against thee, and shall return and confess thy
 “ name, and pray, and make supplication be-
 “ fore thee in this house, then hear thou from
 “ the heavens, and forgive the sins of thy peo-
 “ ple.” There never was an instance wherein God acted contrary to the method here mentioned. Whenever a people turned to him and confessed their sins, he turned away from his fierce anger. If they called upon him in the day of trouble, he heard and answered. If they put their trust in him, he maintained their cause.

Several

Several ministers of the established church, from the consideration of our danger, and seeing no remedy but in prayer and supplication, have resolved to spend part of every Lord's-Day in this holy exercise. They have chosen this day, partly for the sake of the day itself, being a day sacred to religion, and because they wanted to have the joint prayers of those persons, who might be hindered on other days, but who were now entirely free from worldly avocations: and they have chosen to spend from eight to nine o'clock in the evening, because it is the time that could be best spared from the duties of the day, and because after attending upon public worship, the mind would be better disposed for private worship — prayer and the word and the sacrament having put the soul into a proper frame to humble itself before God, first for its own sins, and then for the sins of the nation. We earnestly request our brethren of the established church, and all our fellow christians, to join with us in this religious design. It is a seasonable, and a pious request that we make: and we hope no person, who is a lover of the protestant religion, and of our establishment, will be prevented by any slothful or needless excuse, from offering up his petitions along with ours at the appointed hour; but that all the faithful servants of God in every part of the land will be at the same time, as one congregation, presenting their prayers before the throne of grace. Oh how much to be desired, how good and joyful a thing would it be, to see brethren thus praying together in unity. May God put it into the hearts both of ministers and people thus to pray in sweet agreement, at one time, and with one heart, until
 God

God hear and answer, and deliver this church and kingdom out of their dangers and troubles.

The first part of the duty which is incumbent upon us at this time, consists in humbling ourselves before God, under a deep sense of those sins which have provoked him to send down so many heavy judgments upon our land, in confessing those sins with a godly sorrow, and in turning from them with a repentance not to be repented of. And that we may all be stirred up to a due discharge of this duty, we should be fully persuaded that our public calamities come from our sins. God is angry at nothing but sin. Every man therefore should look into his own heart, and see what great reason God has to be angry with him, and accordingly to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, that he may pardon him and exalt him in due time.

Let each of us then at the appointed hour retire from the world, and in the presence, and before the foot-stool of the sovereign creator and redeemer, examine what grounds and reasons we have for deep humiliation. And

First, We have great reason to mourn and be afflicted before him for the sinfulness of our nature, which is the fruitful parent of all our actual sins. We have corrupted ourselves in every faculty of soul and body; and the sight and feeling of this corruption should give us the most humbling views of our sinful, lost, and helpless condition: for by this fault and corruption of nature, every man naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam* is not only far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, but also deserveth God's
wrath

wrath and damnation. How can we believe ourselves to be thus conceived and born in sin, thus by nature the children of God's wrath, and not be deeply humbled? What can be matter of greater humiliation, than to consider how low we are fallen, that we have lost original righteousness, have lost the image of God, have lost his love, and favour, and grace, and have lost all hope, as to any thing we can do, of his glory? Let us then begin with lamenting the sinfulness of our nature, which is the fountain of all sin. Let us beg of God to cleanse it by the blood of Jesus, and to renew us daily by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may put off the sinful nature, the old man with his deeds, and may put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Secondly, We have great reason to be humbled for the sinfulness of our lives. God requires nothing of us, but what is for his glory, and for our happiness. His law is holy, just and good; but how often have we broken it, in thought, word, and deed — how presumptuously — after how many solemn vows and resolutions — against the light of conscience — against the light of the gospel — ungratefully, after receiving numerous mercies — hardened in sin, after being visited with heavy judgments? Who amongst us is not deep in guilt in these respects? Let us look back upon our past lives, and remember, wherein we have particularly offended. Let us recollect our sins of commission against God's holy law, and our sins of omission, with the aggravating circumstances attending them; and then, considering how injurious

jurious the least of these sins was to the glory of God; let us be humbled to the very dust: For the scripture is clear, and express, "that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God," we have robbed him of his glory. Now it is our duty, as Christians, to live to the glory of God, and to have a single eye to his glory, even in the common affairs of life, when we eat or drink, or whatever we do. Have we then in all times, and in all things, had a single eye to God's glory? Oh guilty, guilty, must we all plead to this charge; with shame and confusion of face must we confess, that we have not spent all our lives to God's glory; seldom have we had an eye to it; and when we had, very rarely have we indeed promoted it. And after we have thus taken an humbling view of our sinful nature, and of our sinful lives,

Thirdly, Let the consideration of our national wickedness humble us still lower before God. Christianity is the religion professed in this country. Ours is a reformed church. We are a free people. God continues to us the light of his gospel. We have his word and his ordinances, and all the blessings of the establishment. We are highly favoured above all the nations on the earth. Now to whom much is given, of them men always require the more, and so does God. He requires more of the professors of christianity, than of the ignorant heathen. But do we make him more returns of love and obedience, than they do? Look around the kingdom, and judge. You will find in several parts of this land, as great ignorance of the life and power of christianity as in the deserts of *Africa*. What distant corner of the

the kingdom has not heard the blaspheming tongue speaking treason against God our Saviour? And where is the happy village free from open and scandalous immoralities? Here is our condemnation, that light is come into the world, and shines among us, and yet we love darkness rather than light. This makes our sins exceeding sinful, that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, and yet they abound among us. To repeat these works by name would be tiresome; to aggravate them is impossible. Open your eyes, you see them covering our land, like a deluge. Open your ears, you can scarce hear any thing, but cursing, lying, and evil speaking. Go where you will, you meet with sin at noon day. It has thrown off restraint, and is not afraid to appear without a mask. Yea, sins abominable to nature are heard of in our land, and there are too many men among us, who refuse to believe, that God ever rained down fire and brimstone from heaven, and miraculously destroyed certain horrible monsters of sin. Stop, and consider, whether these things be so. If they be, have we not great reason for humiliation? Ought we not to be humbled for our national wickedness, and still more humbled, for that having so many means of reformation, graciously vouchsafed to us, we not only continue wicked, but also grow hardened, and thereby grow worse and worse.

While we are thus mourning for the wickedness of our people, let us never forget, that we ourselves are part of the people, and that our sinfulness has made a large addition to the national guilt. Let us never lose sight of this consideration, lest we should find matter for

cenfiousness, where we only want matter of humiliation. The sight of our sins, as part of the sins of the nation, will serve to keep us in a proper frame to profit from the

Fourth humbling circumstance we have to mention, namely, that God is now trying to humble us for our sins. This is the scope and design of his present judgments, and shall we not be humbled under his almighty hand? He has shewn himself offended at our sins, and has chastised us for them as a nation. Hereby he would teach us this useful lesson, that we should turn to him with a national repentance, if we hope to be pardoned and saved. If we now humble ourselves before him, his former chastisements will be turned into blessings: But if after being often chastised, we refuse to glorify him by our humiliation, he will certainly be glorified in our destruction. If the rod of his mercy cannot humble us, the scourge of his justice shall destroy us. Humbled we have not been by any of God's past judgments, therefore we have reason to fear greater: for if being chastised for sin, we nevertheless will not leave it, what can we expect, but to be cut off in our sins? This has been the constant method of God's providence, in his dealings with private persons, as well as with public communities. Fearful is that sentence which is already gone out of the Lord's mouth — Oh that it may strike fear into every careless sinner, who hears it, "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," *Prov. xxiv. 1.* We have been often reprov'd, and yet we have hardened our necks, what then should hinder sudden

sudden destruction from coming upon us, and that without remedy? Let this awful consideration stir us up to plead earnestly with God for the hardness of our peoples hearts. Let us be deeply humbled for those obstinate sinners, who refuse to be humbled for themselves, and let us beg of God to spare them. Spare thy people, O Lord, spare them, and give not thine heritage over to reproach.

Let us lay all these things together, and see whether there be not matter enough for the deepest humiliation. We are altogether sinful in nature, sinful in life, a country professing christianity, and yet abounding with sin, and hardened in it at this very time, when God is chastising and punishing us for our sins. He has given us, during this unsuccessful war, some severe chastisements, but they have not brought us to a right sense of ourselves, and therefore we may expect they will be more severe. God has shewn us plainly, that he is not on our side, and we have felt his displeasure, but we are not humbled under it. Without humiliation he will continue to fight against us, and what calamity is there so great, which we may not then justly apprehend? What success can we hope from our fleets and armies, if the Almighty go out against them? What is our security as an island, if he put it into the hearts of our enemies, and if he come with them, to invade us? In this case how exceedingly should we be alarmed to think, that the *French* may possibly succeed, and that our sins may provoke God to join with them, and to give them success. Every thing dear and valuable to *Englishmen* and protestants would then be lost. Popery and slavery would get possession of our religion

and liberties. While God threatens us with these calamities, he gives us time to pray against them. While they are at a distance prayer is our weapon, and God seems now to put it into our hands. O that we may use it aright to his glory, and to the preservation of this church and kingdom.

My christian brother, after you have weighed these things attentively, judge whether it be not a seasonable and a safe measure, which we would persuade you to take. And you will take it, if you are indeed a friend to our present happy establishment in church and state. Your love for them will put you upon doing every thing that lays in your power to serve them; and here you have a fair opportunity, which if you make use of, it cannot but do you service, and may be a blessing to them. Pray for them at the appointed hour. Determine through God's assistance, that nothing shall hinder you from joining us. Break through all engagements, all hinderances to meet the Lord's people at the throne of grace. And for your encouragement remember, that he who sitteth upon the throne is the God who heareth prayer, and who has invited you to call upon him in the day of trouble, so will I hear thee, says he, and thou shalt praise me.

If it has pleased God to put it into the heart of any person, who reads these few lines, to make part of this praying congregation, and he is at a loss to know particularly what he should ask of God; let him first beg of the father of mercies to give him the spirit of prayer and supplication, that he may offer up his petitions acceptably through Jesus Christ our Lord. And then he must request the grace of humiliation,
that

that he may be truly and deeply affected with the four particulars beforementioned. Let him pray to God to give him still more humbling views of his sinful nature, and to bring to his remembrance his sinful life, with the sinfulness of his sins, that seeing himself to be nothing but vile and sinful dust and ashes, he may be disposed to mourn for the crying sins of this guilty land, and for the hardness and impenitency of our peoples hearts, upon which the heavy judgments of God have as yet made no impression. And then let him implore mercy first for himself, and afterwards for the nation, through the all-atoning blood of the lamb of God. Earnestly let him plead with the Father, that for the sake of his dear Son he would give us grace to turn from our sins by true repentance, that iniquity may not be our ruin. And although the past judgments have not reclaimed us, yet let him pray the more fervently for the gift of the Holy Spirit, that his grace may be poured out abundantly upon us to shew us the error of our ways, and to revive the spirit and power of christianity, that we may receive Christ Jesus the Lord as our Saviour, by the merits of whose most precious blood we may be saved from the guilt and punishment of sin, and by whose almighty grace we may also be saved from the dominion of sin, that being thus delivered by him from the hands of our enemies, we may serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

In these our requests let us never forget to pray for the preservation of the protestant church, and all its members, especially for our persecuted brethren in *France*, and our distressed brethren in *America*, and for the peace of our established church,
and

and for all orders and degrees of its ministers, beseeching God to give them his grace and heavenly benediction, that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth his glory, and set forward the salvation of all men. And to the end there may never be wanting such persons in the church, let us pray for all seminaries of christian education, especially for the two universities. May the spirit of wisdom preside over them, and water them with the dew of his heavenly grace, that the youth educated in them may come forth to the work of the Lord fitted with all proper graces as well as gifts. And since the harvest is now great, may the Lord of the harvest send forth more labourers.

May the God of love dispose us also to pray fervently for all the protestant dissenting congregations, which love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. May he shed that love abroad in all our souls, which alone can effectually free us from party spirit. And may he thus reconcile our hearts to them, and theirs to us. Oh that we may see an end of those bitter disputes, which have so long disturbed the peace, and hindered the union, of protestants: and may there be only this one holy contention between us, whether the ministers out of the establishment, or we in it, shall labour most for the glory of our common master, and for the salvation of those souls for whom he shed his blood.

And as the hearts of kings are in the hand of God, we must pray him to direct the heart of our gracious sovereign lord king *George*, to do what will be for the glory of God, and for the good of his people, beseeching the Almighty to enrich him with every temporal, and with every
every

every spiritual blessing, until he place upon his head a crown of eternal glory.

Let us also pray for the prince of *Wales*, and for all the royal family, that God would endue them with his Holy Spirit, and enrich them with his heavenly grace, that he would prosper them with all happiness, and bring them to his everlasting kingdom.

And let us desire the spirit of wisdom to direct both houses of parliament, all the king's counsellors, and judges, and all the magistrates throughout the kingdom, and to enable them faithfully to discharge the great trust reposed in them, for the punishment of wickedness and vice, and for the maintenance of God's true religion and virtue.

Let us beg of God now to go forth with our fleets and armies, and to give them success against our enemies in this just war, in which we are engaged. And let us pray him to bless our officers and soldiers, and sailors, and to protect them in all dangers, and to cover their heads in the day of battle. And let us earnestly and heartily pray for a reformation at home, without which we cannot expect success from our arms abroad. May the spirit of the living God work upon the hardened hearts of our people, and soften them by his grace, that they may see the error of their ways, and cry for mercy before it be too late, and may they find it through the atoning blood of the lamb of God. Oh that there may be a general turning to the Lord, and may our eyes live to see it. Amen. So be it Lord Jesus.

These short hints may be enlarged and improved, as time and occasion shall offer. My
christian

christian brother, may the spirit of the living God direct thee, how to enlarge and to improve them. And after thou hast once begun, and hast spent some evenings of the Lord's Day in this devout exercise, be upon thy guard, least thou shouldst be tempted to leave it off. Never be tired of such a good work. Pray for the spirit of grace and supplication, and carry thy prayers into practice. The more thou prayest, the more wilt thou have of the spirit of grace and supplication. Go on in his strength, and persevere. Hold on thy suit, and wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us. Be not weary of joining with us, and in God's due time, thou hast his promise, " thou shalt reap, if thou faint not." Lord grant none of us, who set out well, may faint, until we who sow our prayers, and they who reap the fruit of them, may rejoice together, here in the peace and reformation of our land, and hereafter through Jesus Christ our Lord in eternal glory. Amen.

P O S T S C R I P T.

If these lines fall into the hands of any person who approves of them, we beg of him to meet us at the throne of grace the next Lord's Day, and there to wait with us from eight o'clock till nine, and we hope no needless or sloathful excuse will hinder his meeting us weekly at the same hour, until God be pleased to put an end to our public calamities, and to change our supplications into thanksgivings.



